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We are an alliance of brain tumour support, advocacy and information groups around the world, including brain tumour patients and caregivers, researchers, scientists, clinicians and allied health professionals who work in the field.

greater collaboration ► greater knowledge ► greater hope



BRAIN TUMOUR SUPPORTERS WALK THE EQUIVALENT OF MORE THAN TWICE AROUND THE WORLD

Media release – Embargoed until midnight Wednesday 24 October

Brain tumour supporters in seventeen countries have walked the equivalent of twice around the world at the Equator so far this year to honour current and past patients and to draw attention to the need for more research to be devoted to this cancer.

Mr Denis Strangman (Australia), Chair of the International Brain Tumour Alliance (IBTA), said that some 16,000 walkers had so far participated in the **Walk Around the World for Brain Tumours** and there were another eighteen walks to take place during the current International Brain Tumour Awareness Week (21-27 October). (IBTA website: www.theibta.org)

“We set out to circle the world at least once, which is 40,000 kms but the commitment to raising awareness of the challenges of brain tumours has been so great and the idea was so popular that the total distance achieved to date is now more than 80,000 kms. We have been amazed at the response so far - so much so that we are hoping the target will reach at least two and a half times the circumference of the Earth. We therefore urge participants to ‘Keep on Walking’ during this week!”

"The Walk Around the World for Brain Tumours and the activities associated with the inaugural International Brain Tumour Awareness Week truly represent a global effort from people of all ages and cultural backgrounds," he added.

The largest walking group comprised 4,000 students from Arizona who walked around a school oval in an annual fund-raising event for brain tumour research and donated the distance they covered to the World Walk target.

In other instances it was a one-person activity, including a young Canadian man trekking in the High Arctic and a UK pilgrim following the Camino de Santiago route in Spain,

A mother and daughter, who had lost their husband and father to a brain tumour, walked the Ngorongoro crater rim in Tanzania in his memory and also to raise funds for brain tumour research and support.

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A man in Hawaii recruited daily fitness walkers to the cause as they walked in the scenic Queen Kapiolani Park.

Companies and research institutes that have a link to therapies for brain tumours incorporated a walk by staff during business planning days.

Two people will be trekking 120 kms at a height between 2,600 and 5,400 metres in the Himalayas to raise funds for a UK charity for brain tumour research.

In one unstable country which the organisers preferred not to name, police banned a proposed brain tumour awareness walk because of fears it might generate a riot.

The world 50 kms racewalking champion and world record holder **Nathan Deakes** (Australia), who is training from a base in Italy, will donate the distance he covers during the Awareness Week. As an elite racewalker this is likely to be several hundred kilometres.

The World Walk and inaugural Awareness Week have attracted support from almost 100 organisations in 23 countries.

Brain tumours are a neglected cancer but research released by the IBTA this week indicates that at least 200,000 people worldwide develop a primary, malignant brain tumour each year, for whom the prognosis is grim (See: <http://www.theibta.org/uploads/file/MainMediaRelease.pdf>)

Others develop so-called ‘benign’ brain tumours, which can be lethal, and there are also brain tumour metastases caused by a cancer elsewhere in the body.

Brain tumours are unique as a cancer in so far as they attack both the mental and physical capacity of the person.

World brain tumour expert **Professor Martin van den Bent** (Netherlands) has said in a statement marking the Awareness Week “The presence of cognitive deficits, memory disturbances, personality changes and other neurological deficits, often interfere with daily functioning and prevent these patients from leading a normal active life; and because of these cognitive deficits and personality changes the relatives of these patients suffer as well.”

Reports of walks already undertaken and those yet to be held, and other awareness meetings, can be found on the IBTA website at: <http://www.theibta.org/index.php?page=main-information> and at <http://www.theibta.org/index.php?page=recent-events>

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Statistical research: This was commissioned from the Central Brain Tumor Registry of the United States (CBTRUS), Illinois, USA. Contact: Ms Carol Kruchko, President and Administrator. Email: Ckcbtrus@aol.com Telephone +1 - 630-655-4786

Brain tumour patient support organisations: There are hyper-links to 49 national and local brain tumour organisations on the right-hand column of the homepage for the IBTA at www.theibta.org These organisations can provide information and comment about local situations.

BACKGROUND ABOUT BRAIN TUMOURS:

- There are over 120 different types of brain tumour.
- There are two main categories of brain tumours: primary and metastatic. Primary brain tumours can either be malignant (of varying degrees of aggressiveness) or non-malignant (so-called “benign”).
- Tumours are diagnosed and then classified according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) grading system which ranges from Grade I brain tumours (slow growing, least malignant) to Grade IV brain tumours (rapidly growing and highly malignant)
- The causes of brain tumours are, as yet, largely unknown.
- Brain tumours know no boundaries. They occur in people of all ages, from very tiny babies to the elderly, male and female, and across all cultural groups around the world.
- The cancers that most commonly metastasize to the brain are lung and breast.
- **What is needed:** Research into the causes of, and treatments for, brain tumours is seriously under-funded. Better support is needed for sufferers. Equitable access to promising new therapies is another area which needs much work. Understanding the signs and symptoms of brain tumours, and improved availability to a wider range of vital support services including psycho-social support, rehabilitation and palliative care, and access to neuro-oncology care coordinators, are additional goals which most people in the brain tumour community campaign for.

The awareness project has been supported by undirected grants from Schering-Plough, Lilly Oncology, Ark Therapeutics, NovoCure, Antisense Pharma, and Neuroendoscopy.